

DAY OF DAYS

By LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

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CHAPTER II. A Likely Story.

FROM the squalor, the heat, dirt and turmoil of Eighth avenue, P. Sybarite turned west on Thirty-eighth street to seek his boarding house.

have passed on. "Wait a shake. I want to talk to you. Sit down and have a cigar."

"No, I ain't crazy in the head neither," George asserted, with some heat. "I suspected something was queer about that girl right along, but now I know it. I don't s'pose you seen the evenin' paper?"

"Well, I picked up the Star down to Clancy's. This is it." With an effective flourish George drew the sheet from his coat pocket.

"Gee, no!" protested the lady in alarm. "It'd spoil the plant, sure. I'd love to watch you feed it to him, but heaven knows I'd never be able to hold in without bustin'."

"Well, look who's here! 'Tis old George W. Postscript—as I live! With erwards, little one, I wouldst' speech myself to thee."

"Smiling, P. Sybarite approached the pair. He liked Miss Prim for her unaffected high spirits.

"Well?" he asked pleasantly, blinking up at the lady from the foot of the steps. "What is thy will, O Breaker of Hearts?"

"That'll be about all for yours," announced Violet reprovingly. "What's all this about you givin' a box party at the Kueckerbocker tonight?"

"Only I had counted on the pleasure of inviting you myself," he added with a patient glance at George.

"Never mind about that," interposed the lady. "I'm just tickled to death, and I love you a lot more'n I do George, anyway. So that's all right. Only I was afraid for awhile he was comin' me."

Then she jumped up and wheeled about to the door with petitions professionally awl'd. "Well, if I'm goin' to do a stagger in society tonight, it's me to go doll myself up to the nines. So long." She disappeared by way of the vestibule.

late Nathaniel Blessington, millionaire founder of the great Blessington chain of department stores. Although much sought after on account of the immense property into control of which she is to come on the twenty-fifth birthday, Miss Blessington contrived to escape matrimony arrangements until the morning after the wedding.

It is said that nothing has been known of her whereabouts since about the last of March, when she left her home in the Shaynon mansion on Fifth avenue ostensibly for a shopping tour.

This was factly contradicted this morning by Brian Shaynon, who declared that his ward sailed for Europe Feb. 28 on the Mauretania and has since been in constant communication with her betrothed and his family. He also denied having employed detectives to locate his ward.

Refolding the paper, P. Sybarite returned it without comment. "Ain't you hep yet?" George betrayed some little exasperation, mixed with his disappointment. He slapped the folded paper resoundingly in the palm of his hand. "You ain't dropped to the resemblance between Molly Lessing and Marian Blessington?"

"Between Miss Lessing and that portrait?" asked P. Sybarite. "Why, they're dead ringers for each other. Any one what can't see that is blind."

"But I'm not blind." "Well, then you gotta admit they look alike as twins." "But I've known twins who didn't look alike."

"Ah, six on the stall!" George insisted, on the verge of losing his temper. "Molly Lessing's the spittin' image of Marian Blessington—and you know it. What's more—look at their names. Molly for Mary—you make that? Mary and Marian's near enough alike, ain't they? And what's Lessing but Blessington, docked goin' and comin'?"

"Wait a second. If I understand you, George, you're trying to imply that Miss Lessing is identical with Marian Blessington."

"You said somethin', then, all right. It's plain as daylight. When did Miss Lessing come home? Five weeks ago to a day—March foist, or close on to it—just when the paper says she did her disappearin' stunt. How you goin' to get around that?"

"You forget that the story is contradicted by the very person that ought to know—Miss Blessington's guardian."

"Well, if she sailed for Europe on the Mauretania, like he says—how's it come her name wasn't on the passenger list?"

"It's quite possible that she may have elected to sail incognito."

George displayed his disgust in a rude, choleric grunt to see his laborious fabrication, so painfully concocted for the delusion and discomfiture of P. Sybarite, threatening to collapse of sheer intrinsic flimsiness. In desperation he grasped at one final, fugitive hope.

"All right," he said sullenly; "all right. You don't gotta believe me if you don't want. Only wait—that's all I ask—wait. You'll see whether I'm right or not when she turns down your invite tonight."

P. Sybarite smiled sunnily. "So that is why you thought she wouldn't go with us, is it?"

"You got me. If Marian Blessington, must necessarily be such a snob that she wouldn't associate with us poor devils, did you?"

"Wait, you'll see." "Well, I don't mind telling you you're wrong. I've already asked Miss Lessing, and she has assented."

George's eyes, protruding, glistened with poignant surprise. After a long pause he ground his cigarette beneath his heel and rose.

"In wrong, as usual," he admitted, with winning simplicity. "I never did guess anything right the first time. Only you grab this from me—maybe she's willin' to run the risk of bein' seen with us, but that ain't 50,000,000's anybody else but Marian Blessington."

rotten. Now, mind what I tell you, and be good." Mr. Cross swelled with resentment; exhibited a distorted and empurpled visage, but kept silence.

"Paying at the foot of the stoop, Miss Lessing looked up at the two young men and smiled. "Good evening," she said, with a pretty nod for P. Sybarite, and with its fellow for George. "Good evening, Mr. Cross," she added.

Having acknowledged this salutation with that quaint courtesy which somehow seemed to fit him like a garment, P. Sybarite smiled strangely at the shipping clerk.

The letter nimbled something incoherent, glanced wildly toward the young woman and spluttered explosively, all with a blush so deep that its effect was apoplectic. Then, with an inarticulate snort he turned and fled into the house.

Confusion possessed him and with it rage. Stumbling blindly on the first flight of steps, he clawed the atmosphere with fingers that ticked for violent revenge.

"I'll get even," he muttered savagely. "I'll get bank with that boob if it's the last act of my life!"

It was with a suggestion of stealth that he ascended the second flight and paused before the door of the back hall bedroom opened gently for the space of three inches.

"That you, George?" Violet Prim demanded with vivacity. Reluctantly he stopped, and in a throaty monosyllable admitted his identity.

"Did he fall for it?" "All over himself. Honest, V. It was a scream to watch his eyes pop. You could've clubbed 'em out with a bean without touchin' his beak. I 'most died."

Miss Prim giggled appreciatively. "You're a wonder, George," she applauded. "It takes you to think 'em out."

"Ah, I don't know," returned her admirer with becoming modesty. "He's gone on her, all right, ain't he?"

"Crazy about her?" "Think he'll make a play for her now?" "You never can tell about P. S. He's a queer little rink."

Footsteps became audible on the stairs below. "Well, so long. See you at dinner," George added in haste. With determination and a heavy tread, he went on to his room.

When he had shaved (with particular care) and changed his linen (trimming collar and cuffs to a degree of unconform nicety) and resumed his coat (brushing and hating it simultaneously and with equal ferocity for its very shabbiness), P. Sybarite sought out a pipe old and disreputable enough to be a comfort to any man and sat down by the one window of his room atop floor, hall, back to smoke and consider the state of the universe while awaiting the dinner gong.

The window commanded an elevated, if nonexhilarating, view of back yards, one and all dank, dismal and littered with the debris of a long, hard winter.

Unhappily, however, had rendered P. Sybarite immune to the miasma of melancholy he exhaled. The trouble in his patient blue eyes, the wrinkles that lined his forehead, owned another cause.

In fact, George had wrought more disastrously upon his temper than P. Sybarite had let him see. Perhaps it was true. Perhaps George had guessed shrewdly. Perhaps Molly Lessing of the glove counter really was one and the same with Marian Blessington of the fabulous fortune.

Old Brian Shaynon was a known devil of infinite astuteness. It would be quite consistent with his character and past performances if, despairing of gaining control of his ward's money by urging her into unwelcome matrimony with his son, he had contrived to overthrow her in some manner and so driven her to become self-supporting.

Perhaps hardly likely, the hypothesis was none the less quite plausible. A thing had happened within P. Sybarite's knowledge of Brian Shaynon. Even if George's romance were only true in part, these were wretched circumstances for a girl of gentle birth and rearing to adopt.

When Men Talk About Women. Women wonder what the men say. Now, two men talk in public: both husbands. One man answers, "Is Any Woman Easy to Live With?" and he doesn't let the chance go by to "take hold."

house. P. Sybarite had known it intimately for ten years. Use had made him callous to its shortcomings. He could remember most vividly how he had loathed it for weeks, months, and years after the tide of evil fortunes had cast him up on its crumbling brownstone stoop even in that distant day, crumbling.

SILVIS. Last Saturday Herbert Osborn and Mildred Dorman invited the members of the sixth and seventh grades to a party at the Watch Tower. They took well filled baskets with them and spent a delightful day.

Easy to Misjudge Remedy You Need. In Overcoming Blood Trouble Do Not Be Fooled By Mere Claims. Study the Game and You Will Understand Why Some Things Are Deceptive.



"It's sure some shame about her all right."

reproducing process had blurred it to a vague presentation of the head and shoulders of almost any young woman with fair hair and regular features, only a certain, almost indefinable individuality in the pose of the head rendered it dimly suggestive of Molly Lessing.

THE FUTURE DEMANDS. CAN ONLY BE MET BY SYSTEMATIC SAVING TODAY. The future will take care of itself, if you will take care of your money today. Start a bank account in this strong, conservative bank with a deposit of one dollar or more.